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SPEECH OF WILLIAM W. WICK, OF INDIANA,

IN

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, AUGUST 7. 1848.

Mr. WICK said: The friends and admirers of the great senator from South Carolina make it their boast that his logic is always accurate, and his conclusions unanswerable. Those *not* his admirers answer this claim of pre-eminence by representing that, although it may be true that the arguments and conclusions of the senator just named are irrefutable, it is also true that the secret of his perfect success may be found in the fact that he assumes boldly—in other words, begs his premises. Without pausing a moment to express an opinion of my *own* upon this question, I desire to say that, for the reason last stated, the speech of the honorable member, who has just addressed the committee, is perfectly unanswerable. He has assumed facts to suit his inferences, and they (the inferences) drop as naturally from his assumptions as do the drops from the clouds. Sir, there is but one way to respond to the honorable member; and that is, a mode which ought to be avoided among gentlemen. I doubt not the honorable member is perfectly unaware that his assumed facts are merely the gatherings of the small whig presses for the last ten years, by him taken for granted, and condensed by his otherwise very fair mind, and produced as good as new in his estimation. Neither do I doubt that the honorable member is perfectly unaware that a majority of well-informed gentlemen in the country dispute the truth of the most of his facts, and hold the residue to be the very gross perversions of a party press, too insignificant to have a character to preserve by an appearance of decency.

I have obtained the floor, sir—a consummation often devoutly wished for here—to speak. And to whom? To the country? At this late hour, your reporters have all left the hall but one, and he is fast asleep. I do not believe that either time or inclination will stand me in stead to write out my hour's exercise. Therefore, I cannot imagine myself as speaking to the country. To the House? I would willingly speak to the House, if it were here; but alack! where is the House? Not here, certainly; nor, sir, is it wonderful that it is absent, under the circumstances. Whence, then, shall I derive inspiration? A thought strikes me! I will speak to the galleries, and draw inspiration from the galaxy of beauty and elegance which are there, throwing a halo of glory around all within their sphere, and clothing this hall in the garniture of Paradise.

That which I propose to say shall be partly *apologetic*, partly *explanatory*, and partly *denunciatory*; and I caution my audience that I shall so mingle these elements, that it will require some attention to discriminate and arrange my sentences under their appropriate heads.

First, I make the *amende honorable* to the members of the whig side of this House. Some few weeks ago, I wrote a letter to an editor at home, and which has appeared in many places, representing that, by their votes, the allowance of three months' extra pay to the discharged officers and soldiers had probably been defeated; and I presume that the natural inference from my statements was, that such had been the intention of the votes alluded to. Herein I erred in judgment. Subsequent votes and events have developed the fact, that the honorable members did not intend to defeat the allowance of the three months' pay, but to force this (the democratic) side of the House to include in the same bill a provision for the retention of a numerous corps of officers, (for whose services there is no necessity, in the opinion of this side of the House,) at a heavy expense to the country. In this they were successful. They fastened the extra officers to the extra three months' pay, in such a manner as to force us to lose the latter, unless we would also take the former. The three millions which the three months' pay took from the treasury, for the benefit of the war-worn soldier returning from his fields of glory and of suffering, was to us as nothing. We thought of the gallant returned, and of the glorious dead; and had it been ten millions, our votes were ready. But when we thought of the uncounted and only-to-be-guessed-at expenditure incident to the fastening to the army of a caudatory appendage, in the shape of a corps of officers, beyond the necessities of the service, our hearts sickened at the thought of the horns of the dilemma between which we were forced to choose. We screwed our faith up to the sticking-point, and rather than lose the three months' pay, we swallowed the corps of unnecessary officers—

Mr. COBB of Georgia. Not all of us.

Mr. WICK. True, not all; but the most of us. I, for one, acknowledge that I took the dose most reluctantly. If I erred, I hope my constituents will remember the tribulations in which I became involved, in consequence of having subjected myself to the ap-

pearance of having voted against the grant of bounty land, and forgive me.

Sir, I wish to make an apology for Congress. It is said in the country that our sessions are too long. If it be so, the evil ought to be remedied. Let us examine. Since the organization of our government, Congress has always adjourned every alternate year on the same day—the third of March. At the long sessions, every alternate year, the day of adjournment has varied much, and, upon the whole, the sessions have gradually become more and more extended. In 1790, the day of adjournment was May 1st; in 1818, it was 20th April; in 1828, it was 26th May; in 1830, it was 31st May; and in 1832, it was July 16th, and now it is August 11th. This gradual extension of the period of every alternate session is not without good cause. In the early days of our national history, our States were less than half their present number, and our population about one-fourth what it now is. Our national interests were formerly few and simple. Now, they are diversified and complicated. Then, this House would order a public document to be printed, for the use of the members, and two or three extra copies for distribution, which each member would send to his favorite editors. Now, we order documents to be printed, and from thirty to four hundred extra copies to be furnished to each member. These he must frank, and direct to his constituency—a work of much labor and time, occasioning much absence of members from the House, and consequent delay of business. Then, editors throughout the country published a few standard speeches for the information of constituencies, and then few members made speeches. Now, every member who does not desire to make his name oblivious, *must* make one, two, or three speeches. The speeches are so numerous, that the newspaper press cannot publish any considerable portion of them, and have abandoned the practice almost entirely. It has grown into an established usage for a member to publish his speeches in pamphlet form, and distribute the same among his constituents. To this end, he must write out his speeches, superintend the printing, (pay, and pay for it too,) compare the proof-sheets, and when the little pamphlets have been enveloped, he must go to work and frank, and direct them, by the thousand and ten thousand; and, after all, be faulted for not sending out more of them. The onerous labor incident to this operation often occupies the attention of members while the House is in session; and confusion, and waste of time in calls of committees or of the House, is the necessary result. And not only this; but he is expected to frank, direct, and send tens of thousands of speeches and documents, besides his own speeches and the documents furnished at the cost of government. To accomplish this, he will sit at his desk in the hall franking and directing, while a motion is made and stated, a resolution offered and read, or a bill or amendment reported by the Clerk; and when he finds a vote about to be taken, he throws down his pen, perfectly unconscious of the matter before the House, and of course calls for the reading of the proposition. Time is wasted in reading it. So we go.

Sir, forty years ago our predecessors came to this hall every day in full dress, at 12 o'clock, sat at their desks two or three hours without shaking the powder from their locks, rumpling the ruffles which garnished their bosoms, soiling their fingers with ink, or compromising their personal dignity. How different is it now! So soon as the committees act upon the propositions before them, and bring the same before the House, or soon thereafter, we change the hour of meeting to 11 o'clock, and afterwards to 10 a. m.; and we adjourn at various hours—generally from four to ten o'clock, p. m. The mornings are occupied in writing letters, franking, and directing documents, &c., or in attendance upon the committees to which we belong. When the hour of meeting arrives, it finds us in the midst of a letter, or with a pile of documents before us. These we despatch, and away for the Capitol—at what, in Indiana, we call a long lope—not in full dress, by any means. Were a stranger to meet one of us on the way, he would take him for a messenger, de-

spatched for a physician or midwife, or an errand-boy—just escaped from contact with the toe of his employer's boot. Such is the life of an M. C. now, as compared with that of our predecessors of forty or fifty years ago. And the worst of it is, that though the bills to be foisted have increased in a geometrical ratio, there has been no corresponding increase in the mileage and per diem. Yet who complains? Not I. I am content. All I have to say is, that I think our constituents ought to be content, and, so far as they are cognizant of the circumstances and changes to which I have alluded, I doubt not they are so.

I must now proceed to denounce a heresy, which is more frequently proclaimed by men who believe it not, than by those who honestly think as they say. Political writers and speakers of a certain stamp, in most of the northern States, have held forth the idea that the actual object of the annexation of Texas was to increase the power or influence of the slaveholding States in the government. [Here a whig member desired Mr. W. to yield the floor, and he would furnish him with pretty good democratic authority for that idea—holding up what was believed to be an old number of the Ohio Statesman. Mr. Wick declined to yield the floor, but said: Ah! yes, indeed, some of our democratic friends did take that view of the subject at first, before they understood public opinion at the south, west, and north. They soon found their error, as to both, to be extreme. It was but a whisk of the brush of the fox of Lindenwald. Now it would not change the feelings and course of that true-hearted man and bold democrat, Sam. Mayhew.]

Sir, (said Mr. W.) it was no calculation about northern or southern ascendancy which made the annexation of Texas a desideratum with the majority of the American people. This is emphatically true as to my constituency. The convention which nominated me to the candidacy—resulting in my now being here—as democrats always do on such occasions, adopted a set of resolutions. I quote one of them:

“Resolved, That we know no North, and no South, but the union of States.”

Such is the substance. What matters it to them which or what section of the Union has the ascendancy in point of numbers, provided that the Union is preserved entire, and the government controlled by correct principles? When they look into the history of the country, they find that the Father of his Country was a slaveholder; and that, though he regretted the introduction of slavery into this country, and held it as a moral and social evil, yet, in his Farewell Address—his last legacy to his countrymen—he warned us against sectional divisions and jealousies. He made no exception of jealousy, because of an apprehended ascendancy of free or slave States. Again: they find that Jefferson, though disapproving of slavery in the abstract, condemned in the most pointed language the Missouri Compromise, as aggressive and unjust to the slave States. Again: they read Jackson's Farewell Address to them, and they find the same warning against sectional divisions and jealousies which burst from the tomb of Washington. Again: they remember that it was the hand of a slaveholder which grappled with that monster of corruption, the United States Bank, and strangled it to death. They remember that, in that struggle, he was sustained by the southern democracy. They take knowledge, too, of the fact that the southern States were the first and most prominent advocates of the free trade, in which they base their present prosperity. On the other hand, they remember the north as it was in the days of the revolution; they take knowledge of northern progress in the arts, sciences, and morals; they receive nearly all their missionaries, doctors, lawyers, and editors from the northern States. How, then, should they know a north, or a south, or support either in a struggle for ascendancy? They will not. Sir, in advocating the annexation of Texas, they had one predominating motive—the sympathy inspired by feeling of kindred and heaven-born charity. Our brethren had gone to Texas, and settled there in good faith, expecting a continuance of the Mexican

government as it then was. Military revolution overturned the Mexican federative system, and our brethren were shorn of their rights. For ten thousand times the cause which induced our revolution, they revolutionized and made themselves a nation. To secure themselves against threatened Mexican aggression, and to gratify the longings of their hearts for political association with their fatherland, they sought admission into the Union. Our people were told that to receive them, would induce war with Mexico. They reeked not. Had our Texan brethren been in the wrong, they would have received them at all hazards. But as they were in the right, our people stretched forth their arms to receive them, and looked up at the racks on which hung their rifles. Such is charity in the west. There may be elsewhere a seasoning of the charity which begins at home, counts the cost of relieving a brother in the hour of his peril, or calculates political balances. If so, it is not the charity which Christ taught and lived. According to the Divine code, it is selfishness, the religion of hell.

The next thing in order is to respond to the criticisms which have been uttered upon this floor, and reiterated everywhere in reference to the march of the army from the Nueces to the Rio Grande. I will so state my premises that no one will controvert them. Texas was admitted into the Union of States, and in virtue of such admission, her boundary was the bourn of the Union. By an act of her legislature, passed before admission, the Rio Grande was declared to be her boundary. By the terms of her admission, that boundary became subject to revision and alteration by treaty between the United States and Mexico, *and not otherwise*. No act of Congress could substitute a boundary other than the Rio Grande. No treaty was made altering the boundary. Mexican functionaries denounced war, not upon condition that our army should move to the Rio Grande, but because Mexico claimed all Texas to the Sabine. Mexican armies marched to the Rio Grande, crossed it, and threatened our encampment on the Nueces. The President was under oath "to execute the laws." He found a law of Texas defining the Rio Grande as the boundary of that State. It was not counteracted by any other law, or by treaty. He marched the army to the Rio Grande to defend the boundary of the Union, as defined by the only law in existence on the subject, except the Mexican laws, which defined the Sabine as the boundary, and Texas as Mexican property. Upon this action of the President you have criticised. But have any of you told what you would have done in his place? Would you have assumed, without law, that the Nueces was the boundary? Would you have recognised the law of Mexico as obligatory, and so have defended the Sabine, and left Texas a prey to Mexico? Or would you have defended the Rio Grande boundary? Answer, I pray you, in chancery style—not by evasions and equivocations, but directly, "yes" or "no." You never have so answered, nor will you ever.

No, too, according to the law of Texas, Santa Fe with its dependencies was within the State of Texas. The President found it occupied by the enemy. He marched an army, and took possession of it. Would you have done so? Or would you have preferred the laws of Mexico to the law of Texas? Having taken possession of Santa Fe, and finding no American or Texan government, or laws in operation, the President established a government of a temporary character. Would you have done the same, or otherwise? and if otherwise, how? Answer, I pray you, in chancery style. Disclose your ideas on this point for our enlightenment. Verily he is no statesman, but merely a court-yard politician, who finds fault with other men's doings, without showing what ought to have been done.

Take notice, I am now about to plunge into the apologetic. The other day, the honorable member from Pennsylvania [Mr. STEWART] made a speech which I have since found in pamphlet form, and which, judging from the signs about our folding-room, has been sent under the frank of members of Congress to all quarters of the United States. I find in that speech, as printed, that

Gen. Cass is represented to have been formerly governor of Michigan. True. I find it, moreover, stated in that speech, that while Gen. Cass was so, as aforesaid governor of Michigan, he, the said Cass, charged the government with large sums of money for "*extra salary*," which were actually paid to him. On examining the records, I find that no such charge was ever made by General Cass. The words "*extra salary*" are not to be found in General Cass's accounts, nor on the books of the proper department. Now, how does this happen? We all know the high character in the country of the honorable member. He is a member of Congress, and they ought to be infinitely above wilfully mistating facts. It would be at once inhonorable and unpardonable for any one to say the contrary. Besides, a near neighbor of the honorable member—one Ozie—did once, on this floor, commit just such a blunder. He obtained from the department a statement of all the expenditures for furniture for the President's House from the organization of the government till 1850, and so wove them into his speech as to have it appear that the entire amount had been expended by the then President, or to furnish the house for him. Time, which proves all things, brought the truth of this matter before the American people. Generally, they could not command the charity to believe that Ozie made a mistake, for he was corrected here on this floor by a *truly* honorable member of his own party, and cautioned of the consequences to his reputation. He persisted, notwithstanding, and not only made his speech, but had it printed and published without correction. For a time, it passed current as truth. When the gross falsehood of his statements came to be understood, his printed speech was known by the sobriquet of "Ozie's budget of lies." Ozie died, and it is to be hoped that the Lord had "mercy on his soul," but as for his memory, it is damned—intensely. I am very sure that the honorable member from Pennsylvania [Mr. STEWART] does not intend deliberately to subject his name to a like reproach; and, therefore, I infer that he fell into this very great error under the influence of some sort of hallucination incident to very great minds and precocious geniuses. It is a quality of such to disregard trifles. Now, sir, I find, on examination, that though General Cass never either charged or received pay for any such an item as "*extra salary*," and that though in point of fact his salary was neither more nor less than a certain fixed and reasonable sum; yet it is true that, as superintendent of Indian affairs, to promote peace with the Indian tribes, he made many presents to Indian chiefs and head men, and expended sums in their entertainment at Detroit when there on a visit to him, as the representative of their great father, the President, &c., &c.; which presents and kindness were the more necessary, because of the immediate contiguity of the Indian tribes to Canada, and their consequent intercourse with British traders and agents. I find that, for these things, and others of a like kind, he made certain charges, which were found reasonable by the proper accounting officers, and allowed. I also find that he (General Cass) frequently acted as a commissioner to hold negotiations and make treaties with Indian tribes, and, in so doing, made many long journeys, and encountered much expense. These items he charged for; and his accounts being reasonable, they were allowed by the proper officer. These accounts fill some pages of manuscript, and might easily be copied fairly; but the honorable member, under the influence of the hallucination aforesaid, ran his eye over the pages, and, as he had gone to the books to find "*extra salary*," there it was before his eyes; the said hallucination causing him to condense entire sentences and pages into these two words—"*extra salary*." In a subsequent speech, the honorable member has, perhaps, to some small, but not to any considerable extent, set the matter right. To be sure, hundreds of honest men may read his first speech, and believe that Gen. Cass received "*extra salary*," but then the second speech will prove to some future whig President, that the honorable member has recovered from his hallucination, and that he is so far able to read writing and cipher, on a second trial, as

to be fairly qualified for a clerkship in the Treasury Department.

I propose to direct my attention to the propositions which have been, or now are, pending before Congress for the organization of the Territories of Oregon, California, and New Mexico; and, in connexion with the subject of them, to say a few things "apologetic," "explanatory," and, mayhap, a little "denunciatory," and thus consume my stinted hour.

It is, or ought to be, well known, that my favorite principle, in reference to the organization of Territories, is, to leave their local legislatures to settle all matters of *mere* and *local*, of personal rights, and generally all laws of a municipal nature. My reasons for this preference have been given heretofore. Among the most prominent is a regard to the constitution of the United States, which, in my humble opinion, has not vested Congress with the right to legislate for the Territories, further than to extend the constitution and laws of the United States over them. Were the people of the Territories to insist upon it, I am persuaded they have a right to adopt their own organic law, as well as all other laws—not inconsistent, however, with the constitution and laws of the United States—and to elect their own officers. The organic law which Congress adopts or prescribes for them, I consider as not obligatory upon them, until they may signify their assent to it by acting in accordance with it, or otherwise. Their officers they are ever willing should be appointed by this government, in consideration of the payment of their salaries; the people of the Territories being, without exception, very destitute of currency and means. Consequently there has never been any hesitation on the part of the people of the territories about accepting of such organic laws as we propose to them. Their necessities and defencelessness lead them to accede to such terms as we may propose, but would make any stringency on our part the more shameless and inexcusable. To this my favorite plan it is objected, that we, as guardians of the Territories, ought to provide, in the organic laws which we present or prescribe to them, against the practice of certain things contrary to public or private morals. I have never heard it proposed to prohibit gambling or drunkenness, or to legislate for them on the subject of matters having relation to private right or personal relation, except on the subject of slaveholding. This being a sin, or social evil, which we of the free States are free from, (happily, as we think,) we are in no danger of hitting ourselves, or any influential constituent, a rap over the scone by legislating against it. On the contrary, our constituents being opposed to it in their feelings, we find it extremely convenient to recommend ourselves to their favor by taking the matter in hand, to provide against its possible existence in a territory. I have found myself, under the influence of these considerations, almost ready, at times, to set aside the constitution upon a point of moral consideration; upon which point there is but one opinion among those I represent. I can justify such a vote under the influence of a strong necessity. I voted for the compromise bill, though it contained a clause stringently restricting the legislative power of two of the territories. I did so, because I saw almost, if not quite, insurmountable barriers to the organization of those territories, owing to the existence of strange, and to me incomprehensible, diversities of opinion here and in the Senate. For the same reason, I voted for the bill to organize the Territory of Oregon, with the entire (I believe) ordinance of 1757 incorporated in its provisions; and, for the same reason, should the Senate amend it by inserting the words, "inasmuch as the same is north of latitude 36° 30'," or almost any other words of meaning, or no meaning, it will still receive my support. The position of those territories, and the condition of their people, are pitiable. So far as my vote goes, they *must* be organized and protected.

I have no desire to extend the area of slavery; yet I will not withhold my vote from a territorial bill, because it does or does not prohibit the existence of slavery in the territory to be organized. Indeed, not only because of

the constitutional question, but also because I believe no bill can pass both houses organizing a Territory and positively restricting the existence of slavery therein, for the reason of a determination of many members of both houses not to tolerate legislation which they think unequal and invidious, and may prejudice, if not finally cut off, a right which they claim under the constitution, of emigrating to new Territories without forfeiting slaves. I have constantly voted against all restrictions of that or any other similar kind. Yet am I always ready to vote for a bill organizing any Territory with such restriction. I hold this to be no hardship to any one but myself; for if the constitution secures the right alluded to, our legislation cannot cut it off, but will be decided void by the judiciary. The constitution executes itself.

I have said that I disapprove of restricting Territorial legislatures, even on the subject of slavery. I am so, because I deem such restriction an invasion of the right of self-government of the people of the Territories, inherent in them, and having the right to exercise itself the moment they become a social body by organization. But some insist that we ought to restrict the Territories against this great evil. They insist on making an exception of it. The greatness of the evil does not, in my humble opinion, change the rule of constitutional construction, nor add to the powers or duties of this government, nor diminish the powers or rights of the people of the Territories. Those who insist that they will be morally guilty if they give their votes to organize a Territory, without the restriction, forget that they are affecting an attribute in reference to the prevention of evil which God himself has never assumed. In his very nature, He is opposed to all evil. Yet he has made us, placed us in a position where a thousand allurements to evil beset us, and so shaped our natures that we do, uniformly, more or less, yield to the allurements by the actual commission of numerous acts of wickedness. In addition to this, he endowed us with free agency. So you will give organization to a Territory—give it existence—but, poor miserable sinners though you be, you must, for *conscience sake*, not leave it a free agent! You affect to be more stringently righteous than is God! Is He the author of your sins, because he endowed you with free agency? Would you be the author of evils in Territories, because you fail to provide against them in the laws by which you give them existence, and so leave them to their free agency?

I cannot better illustrate this subject than to remind you of what all here know, that, in view of the difficulties in the way of the passage of any law for the organization of any one or more of the Territories, the subject was in the Senate referred to a select committee of able and patriotic senators; which committee reported a bill giving Oregon a full, and, in most respects, unrestricted government. On the subject of slavery there was no restriction, except that already imposed by the provisional government formed, in their necessity created by our very shameful neglect for two years past. The bill restricted the Territories of California and New Mexico from legislation on the subject of slavery. I objected to this restriction only upon constitutional grounds; and as few of the people of those Territories are American citizens, I had the less objection on that account. Let me give a history of the origin of that bill. For some time past, some of the members of Congress from the southern States have insisted that, under the constitution of the United States, the people of those States have a right to emigrate to any of the Territories without forfeiting their slaves. During the present session, it has seemed as if most or many of the southern members had come to that conclusion. If any dissented, they could not but be aware that no law could ever pass Congress for the establishment of slavery in a territory or elsewhere. No representative from a free State can ever vote for such a law; and the free States have a majority on this floor, and always will have it. Hence such dissenters from the common southern opinion, if any there were, could not fail to see that, unless the constitution should sustain them, no law ever would; and that, consequently, to submit the question to the operations of the constitution, in the hands of the judi-

ciary, was the best they could do. On the other hand, the members of Congress from the northern States—whigs, democrats, abolitionists, and barnburners, as well as the press and leveling politicians, philanthropists, &c., &c.—had as constantly and earnestly insisted that, inasmuch as slave-holding is against natural law, it cannot exist in any territory unsanctioned by positive law, and that there is nothing of the kind in the constitution of the United States. They had moreover insisted that, under the constitution, Congress has no power to establish slavery anywhere. Indeed, I believe that, on this last point, all men from all sections agree. A member of this House, representing a northern State, who had never resided in a slave State, who, when he found himself, by the accident of descent, the owner of slave property of value sufficient to have released him from pecuniary embarrassment, (now happily removed,) emancipated the same, because that, being the inhabitant of a free State, he could not appropriately discharge the duties which a master owes to his servant, and for other reasons—who had spent nights almost sleepless, revolving in his mind how some plan could be devised to which a majority of each house of Congress would be brought to assent for the organization of the Territories, at last came to the conclusion, that if all the professions and declarations above mentioned were sincere, there would be no difficulty in passing a bill for the organization of the Territories, leaving the right of slaveholding therein to be tested by the constitution, as adjudicated by the judiciary of the Territories and the Supreme Court of the United States. He therefore mentioned his plan to several members, and finally penned a sketch of it, which went out of his hands. This was before the committee to consider of the subject was appointed by the Senate. In that committee, it is known that the bill was prepared, and proposed by a northern senator. Hence it is a northern proposition for the settlement of a weak and silly adherence, void of real interest, except to little nuns filled with jealousy, and to little men desirous of occasion to address themselves to the local feelings of local constituencies. The bill passed the Senate, and in the House it was defeated. How? Defeated? Why had not everybody insisted that the constitution favored their particular views? And did not the bill leave the question to be settled by the constitution? Even so.

A deep responsibility rests somewhere. If we look at the vote, we find that every southern democrat voted for the bill. Nothing therefore lies at their door. They have proved themselves to have been sincere in their past professions of reliance upon the constitution, or at least of a willingness to submit their interests to be determined by it, and have, moreover, evinced an ardent desire to settle this vexed and troublesome question. The northern democratic members, who in good faith voted for the bill, are in the same category. But how is it with you who defeated the bill? I know some of you represent constituencies who are not content unless you vote against everything on the subject except the Wilmot Proviso. They, too, claim that the constitution secures the Territories against the advent of slavery. If so, what do they want of an act of Congress? To strengthen the constitution? Sir, there is not a county court lawyer in the State of Indiana who does not know that the constitution is the supreme law of the land, and cannot be arrested by an act of Congress. If, then, the constitution plants slavery in the new Territories, your legislation cannot prevent it from going there; and, *vice versa*, if the constitution does not plant slavery in the Territories, it will never be there till some law authorize it. We all know that there is no danger of such a law passing this House. The bill of which I am speaking prohibited the Territorial legislatures from establishing slavery. How, then, could it get there, unless the constitution carry it there? And if that be so, how will you prevent it? By act of Congress, which will be legitimately declared void? Bah! I am sick of silliness! I know that a vote in favor of the bill might have cost you some explanations; but I cannot believe that there is a constituency in the United States who would ask

their representative here to vote for a law for the purpose of either repealing or strengthening the constitution!!!! I much fear that some democratic northern members, who voted against the bill, have sacrificed deeply at an unholy shrine.

As for the whig members from the northern States, I believe they have been pretty consistent. They have for years mostly succumbed to the threatnings of an instinct which they have despised, and are lost in entanglement with it beyond the hope of reparation. What is the constitution, compared with the behests of fanaticism, rejoicing in any opportunity to

"Atone for sins it is inclined to,
By damning those it has no mind to?"

They all voted against the bill.

How is it with the whig members from southern States who voted against the bill? You very well know that no northern member will ever vote for any law authorizing slavery in the Territories by its enactments. How, then, can you ever hope for anything better than the bill of which I am speaking, which left you and your constituents the means of finding your constitutional rights, if any you have under it? Do you better like the free agency plan? or is that unacceptable to you, because it originated with General Cass? If you like it, why did you not propose it? The most of the Cass men would have gone with you for it. It differs little from the bill I am speaking of, and would suit me better. Come! propose it, and I will give you the best assistance in my power. Have you a secret understanding with northern whigs, that after General Taylor is elected President, they will vote for a law placing you on stronger grounds than the constitution places you? If you have, you will do well to take their hands; for, be assured, they dare do anything but that, or "rush upon the thick bosses of Jehovah's huckler." But how am I talking? The day will never come for the fulfilment of the pledge which I am supposing, by way of deriding you in courtesy. You have lost the opportunity of securing for the south the adjustment of this question upon the terms of the constitution, and of securing it forever against the aggressions and taunts incident to northern agitation of the slave question. You have preferred to leave the question open, in hopes that northern whigs, abolitionists, and barnburners may, by its use, gain advantages over democrats. Upon your own heads, and those of your constituents, be the consequences.

What I have said to northern democrats, has been intended for those of you who feel constrained by the will of your constituents to vote against territorial bills not containing the Wilmot Proviso or its equivalent, but who, nevertheless, support regular nominations. I wish not to wound your feelings, and will not do so intentionally. That your constituents should instruct you to vote for the Proviso, is not so very surprising. But that they should instruct you to vote against bills organizing the Territories, without the Proviso, is, I must confess, astonishing. I pray you lay the matter truly before them, and then, if they tell you to rather lose the Territories than to consent to their organization upon the principles of free agency, or of leaving the matter to the constitution,—all I can say is, that they are queer constituencies, but that they ought to be obeyed.

There is another class, claiming to be democrats, but acting under a separate organization, and who, as if it were possible to serve God and Mammon, give not their support, but their denunciations, to the regularly nominated candidates of the party. They are commonly called barnburners. They have contributed, by their votes, to defeat the bill I am speaking of, and to make chaos of everything having a bearing upon the interests of the democratic party. I pray you, gentlemen, understand yourselves, and know that you are understood. Do you suppose the world will give credence for charity towards men of color, or towards laboring white men, to the leaders of your faction, who are known to habitually blaspheme the name of their Maker, in common conversation, and even in correspondence

by letter? Do you expect mankind to give credit for elevated motive to gamblers in stocks, and upon elections, who will instruct their tools how to come it over greenhorns in a stock sale, or to get a sure election bet with an unintelligent person excited by recent attendance at a political meeting?" Or to a canting hypocrite of a banker, who, in the same letter, mourns the want of "stated preaching," and advises a plot how to deceive the public, and individuals, as to the true state of his bank, and to lull them into security, that so his miserable rags may pass current till the time shall come for his bank to make a splendid burst? Have you masses in New York really become so corrupt as to run after such stinking fish? Verily, some of us understand you well. And, to convince you of this, I will explain: It is with the barnburning portion of New York very much as it was with Massachusetts at an early day in our political history. Massachusetts having contributed greatly to produce the Revolution, seemed to imagine that she would, therefore, as a matter of course, take the lead of other States in the control of national affairs. It turned out, however, that when the American people compared the political opinions of the leading men of that State with the political opinions of certain southern politicians, they preferred the latter; and, as a consequence, Virginia policy and Virginia men got the start, and kept it for forty-eight years, with the exception of two short periods of four years each, during the presidencies of the elder and younger Adams. As a consequence, Massachusetts took the pants, and has pointed ever since. Thus with New York. In 1866, the democratic party of the south and north took a fancy to make a son of New York their standard-bearer. They continued him in that office for eight years, though not in the office of President. In 1873 he was defeated. In 1874, the politicians of the south had the same confidence in him as formerly. He had served them marvellously well in his character of "a northern man with southern principles." But there were unmistakable signs of a defection from, and a prejudice against him, among a portion of the masses of the democratic party everywhere—north, south, east, and west. Deterred by this perception of things from supporting him in the presidential convention of 1874, lest defeat should follow his nomination, they turned their eyes to the northwest. The northwestern States had never produced a President; they had grown into some importance, and had given a more thorough support to certain democratic measures than formerly. The delegates in convention from the southern States gave the northwestern man their support; and he would have been nominated, but for a masterly movement on the political chess-board. To prevent his nomination, the peculiar friends of the son of New York took up a southern man, (Mr. Polk,) and gave him such a vote as developed the fact that he could be nominated if the southern delegates would vote for him. They could not do otherwise than vote for him; and he was nominated and elected, and will leave a beautiful record. Strange as it may seem, the peculiar friends of the son of New York not only succeeded thus in preventing the nomination of a northwestern man, but they had the consummate audacity and mendacity to charge his defeat to the south, and the address to induce even some northwestern men to believe the charge. In 1875, the son of New York yet dreamed of a second advent. When, however, the convention succeeded in making a nomination without the aid of New York, a change came over him. His southern principles sloughed off, and he became an avowed barnburner, thereby adopting a principle which, if persisted in long, will dissolve the democratic party. How funny! One of the fathers of the caucus system and regular nominations has become a disorganizer, and is ready to bundle anywhere, with whigs, abolitionists, and renegade democrats, for the sake of at last again reposing in the White House! Verily, "misery makes strange bedfellows!"

In a good cause political men find no occasion to be

uncandid or inconsistent. You, here on this floor, and your adherents elsewhere, have avowed your perfect confidence in the power of the constitution to guard the Territories from the advent of slavery. Yet you vote against a bill leaving the matter to be controlled by the constitution. Again: you have adopted as one of the articles of your creed, that the soil of the United States ought to be open to the occupancy of any poor man who wants a farm. If you really think so, why did your predecessors on this floor in the last Congress vote against the graduation bill? Bah! Again: you hear every representative of the free States declare on this floor that he will never vote for any law establishing or extending slavery in or to the Territories. You heard the honorable member from Virginia [Mr. BAYLY] the other day call for any member from a free State who could or would, under any circumstances, give any such vote; and you know that he called in vain. Yet you and your newspapers at home denounce all who will not unite in disturbing the peace of parties and of the Union, by insisting upon the Wilmot Proviso, and who vote accordingly as advocates of the "extension of slavery!" And, in the west, every political thimbleberry who, in hopes of office, or because he is secretly an abolitionist, lives upon faith in the second advent of the New York dynasty, takes up your song, and does his little best to produce confusion in Hoosierdom, in hopes, at least, to minister to the spleen of him of Kinderhook, by defeating the regular nominees, or some of their friends, through basely begotten divisions. You may pass your insincerities and misrepresentations as current upon the slaves who, as tenants, or operatives, give their suffrages at your wills; or you may successfully fish up converts from the hells and stews of the Five Points; but, believe me, that, with the exception of secret traitors in our midst, and now and then an honest second advent emigrant from your own State, they will be scouted in Indiana, wherever one man has the courage and industry to expose your plans of disorganization and revenge.

In conclusion, I sum up the elements by whose votes the organization of the Territories has thus far been defeated, and, as I fear, will continue be defeated, at least during this session. Those elements are as follows:

- 1st. All the whig members from the north.
 - 2d. A part of the whig members from the south.
 - 3d. All the disorganizers, commonly called "barnburners," including the abolitionists.
 - 4th. A few democrats from the north.
- All of these elements, except the last, are interested, in a *corrupt* political sense, in preventing the organization of the Territories. The American people are anxious to see those Territories organized, and, if all measures for that object fail, they will naturally look to their representatives here for an explanation. You, whose votes have defeated the bill, (except the unfortunate gentlemen of the fourth class,) have one common object to achieve—the defeat of the nominees of the democratic party. You, and the stupid or corrupt presses under your control, will all be in a story, or nearly so. A northern whig will go to his representative on his return, and the following dialogue, in substance, will take place:

Constituent "Why did you not pass a law to organize the Territories?"

Representative. "Ah! have you not heard of Cass having become the advocate (not of free agency—no! you will not say that) of slavery, and that the democrats fixed the bill so as to establish slavery in the Territories, and that for that reason the whigs voted against the bill? It is even so. Only think of old Cass having turned slavery man! Some of his own friends got so ashamed, that they voted against the bill."

That will sound well in the north!!!

A southern whig comes to his representative, and asks "How did you fail to organize the Territories? Representative. "Why, my dear sir, John C. Calhoun and A. S. Atchison of Missouri sold us to the north. They agreed to a bill which would forever have excluded us from the Territories, by excluding slavery therefrom, and we could do no other than vote against it."

* See John Van Buren's published correspondence.

That sounds very well in the south!!!

A barnburner disciple will go to his representative, and they discourse as follows:

Constituent. "Why did you not organize the Territories?"

Representative. "Why, my dear sir, Cass sold himself to the slaveocracy for the nomination, and old Dickinson, to carry out the bargain, got up a bill to extend slavery into the Territories; and you know I could not go that."

Great powers! Such are the political elements which defeated a benign measure of great necessity to the protection of the Territories and their inhabitants, and admirably calculated to secure individual and public rights, and to preserve parties and the country from disunion. Why, gentlemen, if you can, by a union of your popular votes, (not merely adulterous, but verily sodomitical,) elect a President and yourselves, and your adherents to this and the other House, in the proportion in which you now respectively flourish here, you would not have sufficient unity of purpose and community of principle to devise a policy equal to the control of the political and municipal necessities of a negro quarter or hog-yard! You agree in but two things: you all desire power, and you all hate Cass and Butler.

NOTE.—In writing out his speech, Mr. Wick overlooked two or three points and explanations distinctly made in delivering the same.

1st. He has always taken ground against the constitutionality of any act of Congress restricting the legislative action of the Territories in reference to matters concerning which the States are sovereign and independent of the general government.

2d. Upon this ground he has ever voted against both the "Wilmot proviso" and the "Missouri compromise."

3d. Yet when the "Wilmot proviso," in substance, was inserted in the bill organizing the Oregon Territory *against his vote*, he nevertheless voted for the bill. He did so in view of the very great necessity of organizing that Territory.

4th. He cannot give any vote to insert the "Missouri compromise" in any bill for organizing any one Territory or more; nor can he vote to consent in any amendment inserting either of these (in his humble opinion) most unconstitutional regulations, or rather humbags, begotten of sectional jealousy.

Yet if a Territorial bill were on its passage in the House, with the Missouri compromise in it, he would vote for its passage, on the ground of the necessity which has no law, and in the belief that the restriction thus imposed is *in principle* wrong.

He believes many of those who hold to the independence of the Territories agree with him in these views, though he professes to speak for none but himself.

He at all times prefers, to any other principle of organizing Territories, the *free agency*, for which he is an advocate in politics as in morals; and he yet thinks the bill which passed the Senate organizing the Territories of California, Oregon, and New Mexico no substantial infringement of that principle. It is an attribute of the constitution to restrict. It restricts States as well as Territories. All are subject to it. Hence the Senate bill was no invasion of the *constitutional* free agency of the Territories.

P. S. Mr. Wick congratulates his political friends upon the action of the Buffalo Convention. A second advent of, and coalition between, the back-slidden bucktailism of New York and Massachusetts federalism, in the persons of Martin Van Buren and the grandson of old John Adams, of alien and sedition law memory, is a richer event in the ups and downs of political jugglery, than was the alleged coalition of olden days, between the "Puritan and Blackleg."